

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 04990 080153Z

61
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

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R 070517Z MAY 75
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TP RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4867
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC
DIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, US
SUBJECT: PRC TREATMENT OF THE US IN THE AFTERMATH OF INDOCHINA

REF: A) HONG KONG 4912; B) HONG KONG 3600

SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION:
REFTEL A CATALOGUED THE MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS PEKING FACES IN
REASSESSING ITS FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE WAKE OF INDOCHINA
DEVELOPMENTS, A KEY FACTOR OF WHICH WILL BE THE CHINESE
PERCEPTION OF US INTENTIONS AND RESOLUTION. THIS MESSAGE
EXAMINES PEKING'S PROPAGANDA TREATMENT OF THE US IN THE
IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN INDOCHINA
AND FINDS THAT WHILE IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS COMPEL
CHINA IN ITS MEDIA AND PUBLIC RALLIES TO HAIL THESE
VICTORIES, NEITHER IN ITS PUBLIC NOR PRIVATE COMMENT HAS
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PAGE 02 HONG K 04990 080153Z

PEKING ATTEMPTED TO PORTRAY THE US AS WEAK OR IRRESOLUTE.

ON THE CONTRARY, THE EMPHASIS IS ON THE REALISTIC, IF NOT SALUTARY, READJUSTMENTS THE US IS MAKING. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE ACCLAIMING RECENT COMMUNIST VICTORIES IN INDO-CHINA, THE PRC THUS FAR HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS AND CAREFUL IN PUBLIC IN ITS TREATMENT OF THE US. KEYNOTE PRC SPEAKER DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING AT APRIL 19 AND MAY 2 RALLIES COMMEMORATING THE CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAM VICTORIES AND CHINESE MEDIA HAVE PORTRAYED THE COMMUNIST VICTORIES AND US WITHDRAWAL FROM INDOCHINA AS PART OF A LARGER AND LONG-TERM HISTORICAL TREND. SUCH TREATMENT IS CONSISTENT WITH CHINA'S PROPAGATION OF ITS CURRENT WORLD OUTLOOK, I.E. THE GROWING STRENGTH AND UNITY OF THE THIRD WORLD REVOLUTIONARY FORCES AND THE DECLINING POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE SUPERPOWERS (I.E. THE US AND THE USSR).

2. WHILE FULFILLING ITS MARXIST-LENINIST DUTY BY PUBLICLY HAILING SET-BACKS FOR A CAPITALIST SUPERPOWER AS THE US, EVEN IN THE POST-INDOCHINA PERIOD, CHINA BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, CONTINUES ITS DIFFERENTIATED LINE ON THE SUPERPOWERS. THE SOVIETS STILL ARE DEPICTED AS THE MORE AGGRESSIVE, AMBITIOUS AND ABOMINABLE--ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY THE STRONGER--OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. PEKING HAS SPARED NO EFFORT IN HIGHLIGHTING MOSCOW'S LAST-MINUTE AND OPPORTUNISTIC SWITCH IN SUPPORT FROM THE LON NOL SIDE TO THAT OF SIHANOUK AND THE VICTORIOUS INSURGENT CAMBODIAN FORCES AND IN POINTING TO THE SOVIET'S DESIRE TO FILL ANY POWER VACUUM IN INDOCHINA. PRESS COMMENTARIES NOTE THAT ANY SUCH SOVIET MOVES WILL NOT BE WELCOMED BY THE SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNTRIES AND WILL CERTAINLY BE OPPOSED BY THE US. LOCAL PRC-OWNED PAPERS ALSO HAVE CITED DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S STATEMENTS WHICH UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA AND WESTERN EUROPE AS THE US' TWO "FORWARD DEFENSE AREAS". (SENT BY FBIS WIRE TO WASHINGTON).

3. WITH REGARD TO THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT AND RAMIFICATIONS OF INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS, PRC OFFICIALS AND MEDIA HAVE TENDED TO LIMIT ANY REFERENCE TO US POLICY "FAILURE" TO ONE PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHIC AREA.

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PAGE 03 HONG K 04990 080153Z

4. PEKING IS PUBLICLY STAYING AWAY FROM (AND PRIVATELY REJECTING) IMPLICATIONS OF ANY STRATEGIC SHIFT FOLLOWING THE US DEFEAT. IN WHAT NOW SEEMS TO REPRESENT THE PRC LINE, CHINESE OFFICIALS IN MEETING WITH FOREIGN DIPLOMATS HAVE SPOKEN OF THE US AS "OVEREXTENDED," HAVE TERMED INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS A "SET-BACK" FOR THE US, BUT NOTED THAT THIS SHOULD NOT AFFECT US COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE (PARIS 10659 AND PEKING 826).

5. THE CHINESE SEEM TO BE MAKING A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO AVOID AT THIS TIME DIRECT PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE EFFECT OF THE US DEFEAT IN INDOCHINA ON BASIC US STRENGTH AND ON US COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE. HOWEVER, WE NOTE THAT IN RECENT REMARKS TO BRITISH JOURNALISTS FONMIN CHIAO KUAN-HUA EXPLICITLY AND STRONGLY REJECTED ANY NOTION THAT THE US IS WEAK OR THAT INDOCHINA DEVELOPMENTS WILL SET IN MOTION A "DOMINO THEORY" VIS-A-VIS US COMMITMENTS (PEKING 844). THE ACTION SUGGESTS THAT CHIAO IS ANXIOUS TO HAVE THIS POSITIVE ASSESSMENT OF US STRENGTH AND ITS CONTINUED WORLD ROLE DISSEMINATED ABROAD, PARTICULARLY IN EUROPE, BUT PERHAPS ESPECIALLY IN WASHINGTON, WHERE HE COULD BE SURE HIS REMARKS WOULD BE ACCURATELY AND PROMPTLY REPORTED AND READ WITH APPRECIATION. AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, AN NCNA REPORT ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF US PERSONNEL FROM SAIGON WAS ALSO LARGELY DEVOTED TO WHAT THE PRC APPARENTLY SEES AS POSITIVE ASPECTS OF WASHINGTON'S PRESENT STANCE--THE PRESIDENT'S CALL FOR AMERICANS TO "LOOK AHEAD" AND THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS INDICATING THE US WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN ASIA, WILL BE DEVELOPING NEW POLICIES, AND MUST BE CAREFUL IN MAKING AND KEEPING COMMITMENTS (HONG KONG 4771). THE CHINESE, IN PARTICULAR, SPEAK APPROPRIATELY OF US REAFFIRMATIONS OF A STRONG COMMITMENT TO NATO. THUS WHILE WE CANNOT FORETELL HOW RECENT EVENTS IN INDOCHINA ULTIMATELY WILL ALTER CHINA'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE US, THERE ARE PRESENTLY AMPLE SIGNS THAT PEKING REMAINS INTERESTED IN DETENTE AND CONTINUES TO SEE A USEFUL ROLE FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS BY THE US.

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